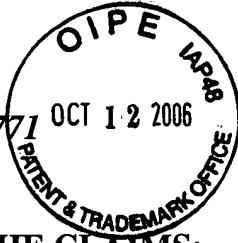


NAKATSUKA et al.  
Application No. 09/986,771  
October 12, 2006



**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A game machine for executing a predetermined game in response to a player's operation, comprising:
  - a display for displaying a game screen;
  - operation switches operated by the player;
  - communications section for performing data communications among other game machines;
  - start timing synchronization section for establishing start-timing synchronization with said other game machines in the game by communications via said communications section;
  - prompt information storage section for storing operation timing data previously defining an operation timing of said operation switches to be operated by the player;
  - a display controller for having, in response when the game is synchronously started, said display display information about the operation timings of said operation switches to be operated by the player based on said operation timing data;

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first operation timing storage section for storing data relating to the operation timings of said operation switches operated by the player responding to the information displayed on said display;

second operation timing storage section for acquiring and storing the data which is stored in said first operation timing storage section of said other game machines through communications via said communications section; and

correlation evaluation section for evaluating, per predetermined unit,  
correlation in terms of game operation with said other game machines based on the data stored in said first operation timing storage section and said second operation timing storage section.

2. (currently amended) A game machine for executing a predetermined game in response to a player's operation, comprising:  
a display for displaying a game screen;  
operation switches operated by the player;  
communications section for performing data communications among other game machines;

start timing synchronization section for establishing start-timing synchronization with said other game machines in the game by communications via said communications section;

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prompt information storage section for storing operation timing data  
previously defining an operation timing of said operation switches to be operated  
by the player;

a display controller for having, in response when the game is synchronously  
started, said display display information about the operation timings of said  
operation switches to be operated by the player based on said operation timing  
data;

first operation timing storage section for storing data relating to the  
operation timings of said operation switches operated by the player responding to  
the information displayed on said display;

second operation timing storage section for acquiring and storing the data  
which is stored in said first operation timing storage section of said other game  
machines through communications via said communications section;

correlation evaluation section for evaluating, per predetermined unit,  
correlation in terms of game operation with said other game machines based on  
the data stored in said first operation timing storage section and said second  
operation timing storage section; and

~~The game machine according to claim 1, further comprising:~~  
independent evaluation section for evaluating whether the timing based on  
the data stored in said first operation timing storage section is in a predetermined  
range from the timing based on said operation timing data.

3. (previously presented) The game machine according to claim 1, wherein said correlation evaluation section evaluates whether both the timing based on the data stored in said first operation timing storage section and the timing based on the data stored in said second operation timing storage section are in a predetermined range.

4. (previously presented) The game machine according to claim 3, wherein said correlation evaluation evaluates, by using, as a criterial timing, the timing based on either the data stored in said first operation timing storage section or the data stored in said second operation timing storage section whichever being the operation timing closest to the operation timing defined by said operation timing data at a predetermined timing, from the criterial timing based on one of the data, whether the timing based on the other data is in the predetermined range.

5. (previously presented) The game machine according to claim 1, wherein said correlation evaluation section evaluates:

(i) whether the timing based on either the data stored in said first operation timing storage section or the data stored in said second operation timing storage section is in a predetermined range from the timing based on said operation timing data at a predetermined timing, and

(ii) whether both the timing based on one of the data and the timing based on the other data are in the predetermined range.

6. (previously presented) The game machine according to claim 1, wherein

said prompt information storage section stores the operation timing data defining a plurality of the operation timings of said operation switches to be operated by the player,

evaluation timing setting section is further provided for setting at least one of the plurality of the operation timings based on said operation timing data as an evaluation timing, and

said first operation timing storage section stores the data relating to the operation timing corresponding to said evaluation timing.

7. (canceled)

8. (previously presented) The game machine according to claim 1, wherein

said communications section is used for infrared communications,

said first operation timing storage section stores the data relating to the operation timings of said operation switches operated by the player during a predetermined segment of the game,

said second operation timing storage section acquires and stores the data stored in said first operation timing storage section of said other game machines for each of the predetermined segment of the game, and

said correlation evaluation section evaluates, for each of the predetermined segment of the game, correlation with said other game machines in terms of game operation based on the data stored in said first operation timing storage section and in said second operation timing storage section.

9. (previously presented) The game machine according to claim 3, wherein said correlation evaluation section differs a number of points to be added depending on a difference between the timing based on the data stored in said first operation timing storage section and the timing based on the data stored in said second operation storage section.

10. (previously presented) The game machine according to claim 5, wherein said correlation evaluation section differs a number of points to be added depending on both a difference between the timing based on said one of data and

the timing based on said operation timing data, and a difference between the timing based on said one of data and the timing based on said other of data.

11. (previously presented) The game machine according to claim 1, wherein when evaluating that the data stored in said first operation timing storage section and/or in said second operation timing storage section is in said predetermined range, said correlation evaluation section increases a game score, and a number of points to be added thereto is differed based on a difference between the data to be evaluated.

12. (currently amended) A game machine for executing a predetermined game in response to a player's operation, comprising:  
a display for displaying a game screen;  
operation switches operated by the player;  
communications section for performing data communications among other game machines;  
start timing synchronization section for establishing start-timing synchronization with said other game machines in the game by communications via said communications section;

a processor for carrying out a predetermined process, in response when the game is synchronously started, corresponding to the player's operation of said operation switches;

first timing storage section for storing data relating to a timing at which said predetermined process is carried out;

second timing storage section for acquiring and storing the data which is stored in said first timing storage section of said other game machines through communications via said communications section; and

correlation evaluation section for evaluating, per predetermined unit, correlation in terms of game process timing with said other game machines based on the data stored in said first timing storage section and said second timing storage section.

13. (currently amended) A game system structured by a plurality of a game machine for executing a predetermined game in response to a player's operation, and a data processing device for evaluating operational correlation among the plurality of the game machines,

said game machine comprising:

a display for displaying a game screen;

operation switches operated by the player;

communications section for performing data communications between other game machines and said data processing device;

start timing synchronization section for establishing start-timing synchronization with said other game machines in the game by communications via said communications section;

prompt information storage section for storing operation timing data previously defining an operation timing of said operation switches to be operated by the player;

a display controller for having, in response when the game is synchronously started, said display displays information about the operation timings of said operation switches to be operated by the player based on said operation timing data;

operation timing storage section for storing data relating to the operation timings of said operation switches operated by the player responding to the information displayed on said display; and

operation timing data transmission section for transmitting the data of said operation timing storage section to said data processing device through communications via said communications section, and

said data processing device comprising:

timing data storage section for receiving and storing the data, one by one, transmitted from said operation timing data transmission

section through communications via said communications section;

and

correlation evaluation section for evaluating, per  
predetermined unit, correlation among the game machines in terms  
of game operation based on the data stored in said timing data  
storage section.

14. (currently amended) In a game executed by a game machine,  
a method of controlling game play of the game comprising:  
establishing start-timing synchronization in the game through data  
communications performed among other game machines;  
reading operation timing data previously defining an operation timing of  
operation switches to be operated by a player;  
in response when the game is synchronously started, having a display of the  
game machine display information about the operation timings of said operation  
switches to be operated by the player based on said operation timing data;  
storing its own data relating to the operation timings of said operation  
switches operated by the player in response to the information displayed on said  
display;

acquiring, through communications, other data relating to the operation timings of said operation switches operated by the player in said other game machines; and

evaluating, per predetermined unit, correlation among said other game machines in terms of game operation based on said its own data and said other data.

15. (canceled)

16. (previously presented) The method according to claim 14, further comprising the step of evaluating whether the timing based on said its own data in storage is in a predetermined range from the timing based on said operation timing data.

17. (previously presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein said evaluating step evaluates whether both the timing based on said its own data and the timing based on said other data are in a predetermined range.

18. (previously presented) The method according to claim 17, wherein said evaluating step evaluates, by using, as a criterial timing, the timing based on either said its own data or said other data whichever being the operation

timing closest to the operation timing defined by said operation timing data at a predetermined timing, from the criterial timing based on one of the data, whether the timing based on the other data is in the predetermined range.

19. (previously presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein said evaluating step evaluates whether the timing based on either said its own data or said other data is in a predetermined range from the timing based on said operation timing data at a predetermined timing, and whether both the timing based on one of the data and the timing based on the other data are in the predetermined range.

20. (previously presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein  
said operation timing data defines a plurality of the operation timings of said operation switches to be operated by the player,  
the step is further provided for setting at least one of the plurality of the operation timings based on said operation timing data as an evaluation timing, and  
said storing step stores its own data relating to the operation timing corresponding to said evaluation timing.

21. (previously presented) The method according to claim 14,  
wherein  
    said communications is used for infrared communications,  
    said storing step stores its own data relating to the operation timings of said  
operation switches operated by the player during a predetermined segment of the  
game,  
    said acquiring step acquires, for each of the predetermined segment of the  
game, other data relating to the operation timings of said operation switches  
operated by the player in said other game machines, and  
    said evaluating step evaluates, for each of the predetermined segment of the  
game, correlation among said other game machines in terms of game operation  
based on said its own data and said other data.

22. (previously presented) The method according to claim 17,  
wherein said evaluating step differs the number of points to be added depending  
on a difference between the timing based on said its own data and the timing based  
on said other data.

23. (previously presented) The method according to claim 19,  
wherein said evaluating step differs the number of points to be added depending  
on both a difference between the timing based on said one of data and the timing

based on said operation timing data, and a difference between the timing based on said one of data and the timing based on said other data.

24. (previously presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein when evaluating that said its own data and/or said other data is in said predetermined range, said evaluating step increases a game score, and the number of points to be added thereto is differed based on a difference between data to be evaluated.

25. (currently amended) In a game executed by a game machine, a method of controlling game play of the game comprising:  
establishing start-timing synchronization in the game through data communications performed among other game machines;  
carrying out a predetermined process corresponding to a player's operation on said operation switches in response when the game is synchronously started;  
storing its own data relating to a timing at which said predetermined process is carried out;  
acquiring other data relating to the timing at which the predetermined process is carried out corresponding to the player's operation on said operation switches in said other game machines through communications, and

evaluating, per predetermined unit, correlation with said other game machines in terms of game process timing based on said its own data and said other data.

26. (currently amended) A game machine used in a game system structured by a plurality of the game machines for executing a predetermined game in response to a player's operation, and a data processing device for evaluating, per predetermined unit, operational correlation among the plurality of the game machines, comprising:

a display for displaying a game screen;  
operation switches operated by the player;  
communications section for performing data communications between other game machines and said data processing device structuring said game system;

start timing synchronization section for establishing start-timing synchronization with said other game machines in the game by communications via said communications section;

prompt information storage section for storing operation timing data previously defining an operation timing of said operation switches to be operated by the player;

a display controller for having, in response when the game is synchronously started, said display displays information about the operation timings of said operation switches to be operated by the player based on said operation timing data;

operation timing storage section for storing data relating to the operation timings of said operation switches operated by the player responding to the information displayed on said display section; and

operation timing data transmission section for transmitting the data of said operation timing storage section to said data processing device through communications via said communications section.

27. (currently amended) A program storage device readable by a game machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the game machine to perform method steps for controlling gameplay, the method steps comprising:

establishing start-timing synchronization in the game through data communications performed among other game machines;

reading operation timing data previously defining an operation timing of operation switches to be operated by a player;

in response when the game is synchronously started, enabling a display of the game machine to display information about the operation timings of said

operation switches to be operated by the player based on said operation timing data;

storing its own data relating to the operation timings of said operation switches operated by the player in response to the information displayed on said display;

acquiring, through communications, other data relating to the operation timings of said operation switches operated by the player in said other game machines; and

evaluating, per predetermined unit, correlation among said other game machines in terms of game operation based on said its own data and said other data.

28. (canceled)

29. (withdrawn) The device according to claim 27, wherein the method steps further comprise the step of evaluating whether the timing based on said its own data in storage is in a predetermined range from the timing based on said operation timing data.

30. (withdrawn) The device according to claim 27, wherein said evaluating step evaluates whether both the timing based on said its own data and the timing based on said other data are in a predetermined range.

31. (withdrawn) The device according to claim 30, wherein said evaluating step evaluates, by using, as a criterial timing, the timing based on either said its own data or said other data whichever being the operation timing closest to the operation timing defined by said operation timing data at a predetermined timing, from the criterial timing based on one of the data, whether the timing based on the other data is in the predetermined range.

32. (withdrawn) The device according to claim 27, wherein said evaluating step evaluates whether the timing based on either said its own data or said other data is in a predetermined range from the timing based on said operation timing data at a predetermined timing, and whether both the timing based on one of the data and the timing based on the other data are in the predetermined range.

33. (withdrawn) The device according to claim 27, wherein said operation timing data defines a plurality of the operation timings of said operation switches to be operated by the player,

the step is further provided for setting at least one of the plurality of the operation timings based on said operation timing data as an evaluation timing, and said storing step stores its own data relating to the operation timing corresponding to said evaluation timing.

34. (withdrawn) The device according to claim 27, wherein said communications is used for infrared communications, said storing step stores its own data relating to the operation timings of said operation switches operated by the player during a predetermined segment of the game,

said acquiring step acquires, for each of the predetermined segment of the game, other data relating to the operation timings of said operation switches operated by the player in said other game machines, and

said evaluating step evaluates, for each of the predetermined segment of the game, correlation among said other game machines in terms of game operation based on said its own data and said other data.

35. (withdrawn) The device according to claim 30, wherein said evaluating step differs the number of points to be added depending on a difference between the timing based on said its own data and the timing based on said other data.

36. (withdrawn) The device according to claim 32, wherein said evaluating step differs the number of points to be added depending on both a difference between the timing based on said one of data and the timing based on said operation timing data, and a difference between the timing based on said one of data and the timing based on said other data.

37. (withdrawn) The device according to claim 27, wherein when evaluating that said its own data and/or said other data is in said predetermined range, said evaluating step increases a game score, and the number of points to be added thereto is differed based on a difference between data to be evaluated.

38. (currently amended) A program storage device readable by a game machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the game machine to perform method steps for controlling gameplay, the method steps comprising:

establishing start-timing synchronization in the game through data communications performed among other game machines;

carrying out a predetermined process corresponding to a player's operation on said operation switches in response when the game is synchronously started;

storing its own data relating to a timing at which said predetermined process is carried out;

acquiring other data relating to the timing at which the predetermined process is carried out corresponding to the player's operation on said operation switches in said other game machines through communications, and evaluating, per predetermined unit, correlation with said other game machines in terms of game process timing based on said its own data and said other data.

39. (previously presented) The game machine according to claim 1, wherein said correlation evaluation section evaluates whether the timing based on the data stored in said first operation timing storage section and/or the data stored in said second operation timing storage section is in a predetermined range from the timing based on said operation timing data at a predetermined timing.

40. (currently amended) In a game executed by a game machine having operation switches, a method of controlling game play of the game comprising:

reading operation timing data previously defining an operation timing of operation switches to be operated by a player;  
displaying information about the operation timings of said operation switches to be operated by the player based on said operation timing data on a display of the game machine;

storing its own data relating to the operation timings of said operation switches operated by the player in response to the information displayed on said display;

acquiring, through communications, other data relating to the operation timings of operation switches operated by another player on another game machine;

determining an absolute time lag between operation timings of the operation switches of at least one of the game machines and the operation timings of operation switches defined by the read operation timing data; and

determining a relative time lag between the operation timings of the operation switches operated by the player on the game machine and the operation timings of the operation switches operated by the another player on the another game machine.

41. (previously presented) The method as in claim 40, further comprising evaluating a correlation among the game machines based on the determined absolute time lag and the determined relative time lag.

42. (currently amended) In a game machine system having a first game machine having switches operated by a first user and a second game machine having switches operated by a second user, a method comprising:

displaying information on the first and second game machines regarding the desired operation timings of switches;

determining an absolute time lag between the actual operation timings of the switches on the first game machine by the first user and the desired operation timings of switches;

determining a relative time lag between the operation timings of the switches on the first game machine by the first user and the operation timings of the switches on the second game machine by the second user; and

evaluating, per predetermined unit, a correlation of operation among the first and second game machines based on the determined absolute time lag and the determined relative time lag.

43. (previously presented) The method as in claim 42, further comprising determining another absolute time lag between the operation timings of the switches on the second game machine by the second user and the desired operation timings of switches, wherein the correlation is evaluated based on the determined absolute time lag, the relative time lag and the another absolute time lag.

44. (new) The game machine according to claim 1, wherein

the second operation timing storage section acquires and stores, upon finishing the game, the data which is stored in said first operation timing storage section of said other game machines through communications via said communications section; and

the correlation evaluation section evaluates, upon finishing the game, correlation in terms of game operation with said other game machines based on the data stored in said first operation timing storage section and said second operation timing storage section.